

January 10th, 2009

TO: Members of the House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Boyce Fowler, volunteer advocate AARP Montana

RE: HB 372- Revise Exemptions from jury duty.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Boyce Fowler and I'm a volunteer advocate for AARP Montana—a non-profit, non-partisan organization of 165,000 members in this state.

Family caregiving is at the core of what sustains the majority of frail elders and adults with disabilities. Unpaid family and friends (known as informal caregivers) are a vital component of this country's health and long-term care system. However, the significance of their role, and their own burdens and compromised health are often overlooked.

Members of the committee, we would be overlooking their burdens again today by a failure to pass House Bill 372. The critical role that caregivers play in a dependent's life should be respected and honored and requiring jury duty service of these people could cause undue hardships on those already vulnerable.

Thank you, and we urge your support of House Bill 372.